

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual
2 interests, comprising the steps of:
3 presenting a media object to a first user;
4 accepting a first comment from the first user;
5 presenting the media object to a second user along with the first comment;
6 accepting a reply comment from the second user; and
7 if the reply comment fits a matching criteria, connecting the first and the
8 second user in a messaging session.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the matching criteria is in the form
2 of an approval indication by the first user of the reply comment.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the media object includes one, or a
2 combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
2 presenting the media object and the first comment to a third user and
3 subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;
4 presenting the first user with reply comments accepted from the third or
5 subsequent users; and
6 if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are
7 accepted by the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments
8 to the messaging session.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is
2 a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user.

1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is
2 a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user, such that the
3 predetermined display count is lower for more popular media objects relative to less
4 popular media objects and lower for more popular first users relative to less popular first
5 users.

1 7. The method of claim 4, wherein the predetermined display count is
2 a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are
3 associated with the nodes.

1 9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment
3 with one of the nodes; and
4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of
5 the nodes.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising a step of limiting the
2 subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent
3 node.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1 12. A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual
2 interests, comprising the steps of:
3 presenting a media object to a plurality of users;
4 accepting a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;
5 presenting the media object and the first comment to the plurality of users;
6 accepting a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users;
7 presenting the reply comment to the first user; and
8 connecting the first and the second user in a messaging session if the first
9 user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes one, or
2 a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
2 presenting the media object and the first comment to a third user and
3 subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;
4 presenting the first user with reply comments accepted from the third or
5 subsequent users; and
6 if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are
7 accepted by the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments
8 to the messaging session.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count
2 is a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user.

1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count
2 is a function of the popularity of the media object and the first user, such that the
3 predetermined display count is lower for more popular media objects relative to less

4 popular media objects and lower for more popular first users relative to less popular first
5 users.

1 17. The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display count
2 is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1 18. The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are
3 associated with the nodes.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:
2 accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment
3 with one of the nodes; and
4 presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of
5 the nodes.

1 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising a step of limiting the
2 subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent
3 node.

1 21. The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects are
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1 22. The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes a link
2 to the first comment.

1 23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of the second
2 user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more
3 comments including the first comment.

1 24. A method, in a messaging server, of connecting parties with mutual
2 interests, comprising the steps of:
3 presenting a media object to a plurality of users;
4 accepting a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;
5 presenting the media object and a link to the first comment to the plurality
6 of users;
7 accepting a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users in
8 response to the first comment;
9 presenting the reply comment to the first user; and
10 connecting the first and the second user in a messaging session if the first
11 user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1 25. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of the second
2 user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more
3 comments including the first comment.

1 26. The method of claim 24, wherein the messaging session is an
2 instant message session.

1 27. The method of claim 24, further including the step of providing the
2 first comment to the second user in response to a search inquiry entered by the second
3 user.

1 28. The method of claim 27, wherein the search inquiry is a keyword
2 search.